

RED ALERT

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COMMUNITY FIRST MEDICAL CENTER AT RISK OF CUTS, CLOSURE

What's happening?

Financial analysis by National Nurses United (NNU) shows that Community First Medical Center is extremely vulnerable to service cuts, due to pending cuts imposed by H.R. 1 and Community First's poor management.

In its "A Preventable Crisis" report, NNU found that Community First's reliance on Medicaid and Medicare funding, coupled with financial patterns similar to recently closed hospitals, put the facility – and 600 hospitals nationwide – at risk of cuts and closure once H.R. 1 cuts take effect.

- » **Medicare and Medicaid are responsible for 58 percent of Community First's net patient revenue.**
- » **H.R. 1's nearly \$1 trillion in federal health care funding cuts will lead to 10 million people losing their insurance by 2034, while delivering massive tax benefits to the wealthiest households in America.**
- » **Community First has lost more than \$18 million from 2020 through 2024, according to Medicare Cost Reports.**

Community First nurses are equally concerned by how the hospital's owners and management will respond to the cuts, given their previous failures to address staffing, infrastructure, and worker protections issues – despite \$75 million gifted to the hospital in taxpayer grants. The hospital's failure to adequately provide protections to nurses during the height of the pandemic led to the death of three nurses at Community First in 2020. As a result of this failure to protect nurses and patients, OSHA cited the hospital administration in December 2020 and issued a fine of \$13,500.

Who would be hurt by service cuts or closures at Community First?

Community First is a safety-net hospital that provides critical lifesaving care in the Northwest Side of Chicago.

- » **In 2024, the last available year for this data, Community First received 31,198 emergency room visits (representing an increase of 38 percent since 2020) and admitted 2,956 patients.**

Community First has a busy emergency department with an average wait time of nearly 4 hours from emergency room arrival to departure for discharged patients. This is far longer than the state average of nearly 3 hours.

Community First's patients represent the racial and ethnic diversity of Cook County. According to data from the Census Report, the racial make-up of the top three zip codes of patients at Community First indicates that nearly 60 percent are Latine, more than 25 percent are white, seven percent are Black, and the poverty rate is nearly 14 percent, higher than the national average of 10.6 percent.

In a 2025 community needs assessment, respondents rated the following as their top chronic health concerns:

- » Diabetes - 22 percent
- » Obesity - 19 percent
- » Age-related physical illnesses - 17 percent

In the same survey, respondents rated the following as the biggest health issues:

- » Adult mental health - 26 percent
- » Substance abuse - 22 percent
- » Homelessness and housing instability - 18 percent

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Where would patients go if services are reduced or closed?

If Community First loses services or closes, the next closest hospital for the community would be Resurrection Medical Center. Resurrection is about five miles away, and could add an additional 20 to 30 minutes travel time by car and nearly 40 minutes by public transportation.

Resurrection Medical Center had more than 27,000 ER visits in 2024. According to Medicare reports, the average ER wait time at Resurrection Medical Center 2024 was 3 hours and 13 minutes. That same report indicates that just 29 percent of patients received appropriate care for severe sepsis or shock at Resurrection Medical Center, compared to a state average of 61 percent and a national average of 64 percent.

What's the bottom line?

Community First is a safety-net hospital that is a vital part of the Chicago health care delivery system. The neighboring hospital is already busy, and would struggle to absorb the needs of the patients who seek care at Community First.

Unfortunately, the owners of Community First have failed to maintain appropriate staffing, as well as the infrastructure of the hospital. Nurses are very concerned that unless action is taken to reverse the federal funding cuts mandated by H.R.1, Community First owners will fail to address these issues and instead use the loss of funding to further erode medical services at the hospital.

Union nurses who are members of National Nurses Organizing Committee, an affiliate of NNU, are now in bargaining with Community First, where they are pushing for the hospital's commitment to provide the highest quality of care to their patients.

Sources:

American Hospital Directory; The U.S. Census Report, The Alliance for Health Equity Community Needs Assessment, Illinois Hospital Report Card, Medicare Cost Reports, hospital financial vulnerability analysis based on Medicare cost reports; provider websites

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